

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Workplace Safety
Minister for Early Childhood



Monday, 14 December 2020

BUILDING AND UPGRADING KINDERS ACROSS VICTORIA

The Andrews Labor Government will build and upgrade kindergartens across Victoria – creating thousands of new kinder places and hundreds of jobs as Victoria rolls out funded universal Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt and Member for Williamstown Melissa Horne today visited Newport Gardens Children's Centre to announce 127 kinders across Victoria will share in \$46.9 million through the Building Blocks programs – which works to boost kindergarten places and improve learning spaces.

Seven new early learning facilities, five new integrated children's centres, three modular buildings and 20 building expansions are among the projects funded. These projects will create an almost 2,200 funded kindergarten places across 32 local government areas.

More than 90 kinders will also share in almost \$8 million to improve existing early-learning facilities. Projects range from upgrades to the outdoor play spaces, landscaping improvements and much needed refurbishment of bathrooms.

Newport Gardens Early Years Centre will receive a \$600,000 Building Blocks grant to expand the early childhood facility to create an extra 33 places for local families. While down the road a new children's centre with 84 long day care places, 44 kinder places and two allied health rooms providing specialist health services for children will be built – following a \$1 million grant.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* will invest a further \$38.5 million into the *Building Blocks* grants program, which offers early childhood providers funding towards building, expanding, improving and creating more inclusive early learning facilities.

The Building Blocks program supports early childhood providers create infrastructure capacity for three and four-year-old funded kindergarten services, improves early learning facilities, creates inclusive kindergarten settings and delivers information technology devices to eligible services.

In an Australian-first, the Labor Government is investing \$5 billion this decade to deliver two years of funded kindergarten for all Victorian children, with the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten underway this year.

The Labor Government has committed \$1.68 billion over 10 years to support the reform's required infrastructure expansion to meet the demand for three-year-old enrolments and population growth.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Early Childhood Ingrid Stitt

"Creating more places for children to attend kindergarten and ensuring they can access the best facilities across Victoria is vital to ensuring a world-class education in the early years."

"The evidence is clear that two years are better than one when it comes to early learning, which is why we are investing millions across Victoria to ensure every child has a place."

Quote attributable to Member for Williamstown Melissa Horne

"This fantastic announcement will mean that there is space for every child as we roll out Three-Year-Old Kinder in Newport."

Media contact: Matt Dixon 0438 190 148 | matthew.dixon@minstaff.vic.gov.au